

Access and Quality of Preschool and Childcare Workgroup

March 9 Meeting Notes

The following workgroup members were in attendance:

Selena Mayo, Total Action for Progress (Head Start and Early Head Start provider)
Bill Ermatinger, Huntington Ingalls/ Chamber of Commerce
Phyllis Mondak, Special Education, Dept of Education
Toni Cacace-Beshears, VA Association for Early Childhood Education
Josie Webster, VA Council for Private Education
Sharon Veatch, Child Care Aware
Karen Lange, Regional Military Child Care Liaison, Child Care Aware
Teresa Harris, JMU
Sue Gellar, Wingspan
September Jones, Knowledge Universe
Emily Griffey, Voices for Virginia's Children
Allison Gilbreath, VCU

The following workgroup members were on the phone:

Barb Newlin, Division of Childcare and Early Childhood, Dept of Social Services
Cheryl Thompson-Stacy, Lord Fairfax Community College
Karen Gallagher, Virginia Tech

Reports from Subgroups (Attachments were circulated prior to the meeting, and are [online here](#)).

Access Subgroup: Sharon walked the group through the Access Subgroup document which outlines features of a truly accessible system the group agreed on; and the group's top 4 priorities as far as increasing access.

There were questions about the cost of quality calculator and how it has been used in others states and how we might use it in Virginia. Barb noted that it's a complex model that requires lots of detailed inputs. It was used in the Tiered Subsidy study that was requested by Sen. Miller and provided to the General Assembly this winter. The workgroup could look at this and its use in other states to determine if/how it should be pursued here.

Quality Subgroup: Karen explained that the group boiled down core elements of quality programming that would be relevant to any setting; including areas of priority to be considered.

The group discussed the need to operationalize these components of quality in Virginia as being the heart of the matter. Some suggestions included:

- Creating a better floor (licensing) by tightening those requirements
- Coordinating existing technical assistance (at Child Care Aware) or funding additional TA staff at DSS to help providers access existing resources
- Aligning standards, assessments and professional development around core values of early childhood system in VA

There was also discussion about the need to educate Center directors on these standards of quality and the resources available to them within different priority areas.

Professional Development Subgroup: Phyllis and workgroup members started with ECAC documents on professional development, and identified remaining challenges and recommendations. They acknowledged the reality that many of the programs have their own system of training but it is separate due to different funding streams but that there is a need for a comprehensive system that covers everyone who is involved in caring for children birth to 5.

They noted there are some immediate steps that the group could recommend:

- Possible recommendation for SCHEV to look at a 4 year Early Childhood degree whereby those with an AA in early childhood could add 2 years at a 4-year institution and at the end of 4 years have an early childhood degree with skills applicable to the field.
- Formalize and empower the VCPD (with Council or Children's Cabinet)
- DOE is currently waiting on the Governor and Attorney General's Office for feedback on proposal for birth – 5 licenses; that is needed before progress can be made at DOE. Group could recommend or request those opinions be sent back ASAP.

But that the need for a comprehensive system is the ultimate goal for us to be working towards. The group will work to refine the recommendations and update the ECAC documents, with an eye toward short and long term recommendations

There was also discussion about the difference between pre-service and in-service needs to be looked at. In service training can be provided on evidence based practices, in cost effective ways that helps providers improve the basic quality of their programs.

The group discussed the complicated nature of how professional development affects quality and access in the system. The lack of PD certainly lowers the quality, but compensation is such that it doesn't easily accommodate increased PD/Quality. Inherently increased PD/ Quality/ Compensation means decreased access for some families.

Additionally, it was noted that there is a need to align standards, assessments and professional development around core values of early childhood system in VA.

Next Steps for Subgroups:

Each of the subgroups will meet before the March 30th meeting. In addition the Access and Quality groups will meet together once to discuss how to increase access to quality via existing systems – VSQI, accreditation, licensure, etc. Refinements will be made to initial ideas, with the goal of some concrete recommendations being presented on the 30th for discussion.

Upcoming Meetings:

Monday, March 30, 2015 at 1pm (same location): Continue discussion of recommendations from subgroups; discuss priority #4: *Strengthen outreach and education Virginia parents regarding quality early care*

Monday, April 13, 2015 at 1pm (same location): Finalize recommendations of the workgroup to send to the full council

April 24, Workgroup Recommendations due to Holly Coy by COB

Next Full CCCS Meeting:

May 4, 2015 at 3pm in West Reading Room of the Patrick Henry Building